Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough, and VVilliam of *Cloudeſle*.

Adam Bell. William Clim of the Clough

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BRITISH MUSEUM

Adam Bell.

WErry it was in the græne forest,
among the leaves græne:
Wheras men hunt East & west,
with bowes and arrowes kéene,
To raise the Déere out their den,
such sights have have oft béene séene,
As by three yeoman of the Nozth Country,
by them it is I meane.
The one of them hight Adam Bell,
another Clim of the Clough:
The third was William of Cloudesle,
an Archer good enough.
They were out-lawed for Venison,
these yeomen every chone:
They swore them brethren on a day,
to English wood for to gone.
Now lithe and listen Gentlemen,
that of mirth loueth to heare:
Two of them single men,
the third had a wedded fere.
William was the wedded man,
much more then was his care:
He said to his brethren on a day,
to Carlile he would fare.
There to speake with Alice his wife,
and with his children three:
By my troth said Adam Bell,
not by the counsell of mée,
For if we go to Carlile brother,
and from this wide wood wend,
If that the Justice do you take,
your life is at an end.

If that I come not to morrow brother,
by prime to you againe:
Trust you then that I am taken,
or else that I am slaine.
He take his leave of his brethren two,
and to Carlile he is gone:
There he knocked at his owne window,
shortly and anon.
Where be you faire Alice he said,
my wife and children thee:
Lightly let in thy owne husband,
William of Cloudesle.
Alas then said faire Alice,
and sighed very sore:
This place hath bene beset for you,
full halfe a yere and more.
[illegible] I am here said Cloudesle,
[illegible] that in we were:
Now fetch us meate and drinke enough,
and let us make good chere.
She fetcht him meat and drinke plenty,
like a true wedded wife:
And pleased him with what she had,
whom she loved as her life.
There lay an old wife in [illegible]
a little before the fire:
Which William had found of charity,
more than seven yere.
Up she rose, and forth she goes,
evill might she speed therefore:
For she had set no foote on ground,
in seven yeres before.
She went into the Justice hall,
as fast as she could hye:
This night she said is come to towne,

William

William of Cloudesle.
Thereat the Justice was full faine,
and so the Sheriffe also:
Thou shalt not travell hither for nought,
thy meed thou shalt have ere thou goe.
They gave to her a right good gowne,
of Scarlet it was I heard saine:
She toke the gift and home she went,
and couched her downe againe.
They raised the towne of merry Carlile,
in all the haste they can:
And thronging fast unto the house,
as fast as they might gan.
There they beset the good yeoman,
about on every side:
William heard great noise of the folke,
that thither-ward fast hide.
Alice opened a backe window,
and looked all about:
She was ware of the Justice & Sheriffe
and with them a great rout.
Alas treason, then cryed Alice,
ever woe may thou be:
Go into my chamber husband she said,
save thee William of Cloudesle.
He toke his sword and his buckler,
his Bow, and children three:
And went into the strongest chamber,
where he thought surest to be.
Faire Alice like a Lover true,
with a Pollax in her hand:
Said, he shall dye that commeth in
this doore, while I may stand.
Cloudesle bent a right good Bowe,
that was of a trusty tree:

He smote the Justice on the brest,
That his strawe burst in thre.
Gods curse of his heart said William,
this day thy coate did on.
If it had bene no better then mine
it had bene nere the bone,
Yeld the Cloudesle, said the Justice,
and thy bowe and thine arrowes thee fro:
Gods curse on his heart, said faire Alice,
that my husband counselleth so.
Set fire on the house said the Sheriffe,
sith no better it will bee:
And burne we the rein William he saith,
his wife and children three.
They fired the house in many a place,
the fire flew on hie,
Alas then said faire Alice,
I see we here shall die.
William opened a backe window,
that was in his chamber hie:
And there with shetes he did let downe,
his wife and children three:
Have here my treasure said William,
my wife and children three;
For Christs love do them no harme,
but wreake you all on mee.
William shot so wondrous well,
till his arrowes were all go,
And fire so fast about him fell,
that his bow-string brent in two.
The sparkles brent and fell upon,
good William of Cloudesle:
But then was he a wofull man,
and said, this is a Cowards death to me,
Lever had I said William,

with

with my sword in the rout to run:
Then here amongst mine enemies wood,
so cruelly to burne.
He toke his sword and his bucklet then,
and among them all he ran:
Where the people thickest were,
he smote downe many a man.
There might no man abide his strokes,
so fiercely on them he run: (him,
Then they threw windowes and doores on
and so toke that yeoman,
There they him bound hand and foote,
and in a depe dungon him cast:
Now Cloudesle then said the Justice,
thou shalt be hanged in haste.
One vow shall I make said the Sheriffe,
a paire of new gallowes thou shalt have,
And all the gate of Carlile shall be shut,
there shall no man come in thereat.
There shall not helpe Clim of the Clough,
nor yet Adam Bell,
Though they come with a thousand moe,
nor all the Divels in hell.
Early in the morning the Justice arose,
to the gates fast gan he gone:
And commanded to shut close,
tightly every chone.
Then went to the Market place,
as fast as he could hie:
A paire of new Gallowes there did he set
beside the Pillory. (up,
A little Boy stood them among,
and askt what meant that Gallow tree:
They said to hang a good yeoman,
called William of Cloudesle.

That little Boy was towne Swine-heard
and kept faire Alice Swine:
Ful oft he had séene Cloudesle in the wood
and gave him there to dine.
He went out of a creuice of the wall,
and lightly to the wood he ron:
Ther met he with these wightsome yeõen,
shortly and anon.
Alas then said the little boy,
you tarry here all to long:
Cloudesle is tane and doomd to death,
and ready to be hangd.
Alas then said good Adam Bell,
that euer we saw the day:
He might haue tarried here with vs,
seo ft we did him pray.
He might haue dwelt in gréene Forest,
vender these shadowes shéene:
And kept both him and vs at rest,
out of all trouble and téene.
Adam bent a rich good bowe,
a great Heart soone he had slaine:
Take that childe he said to the dinner,
and bring me mine arrow againe,
Now go we hence said these iolly yeomen
tarry we no longer here:
We shall him borrow by Gods grace,
though we buy it full déere,
To Carlile went these good yeomen,
in a merry morning of May:
Here is a fit of Cloudesle,
and another is for to say.

And when they came to merry Carlile,
in a faire morning tide,

They

They found the gates shut them into,
round about on euery side.
Alas then said good Adam Bell,
that euer we were made men,
These gates are shut so wondrous well,
that we may not come therein.
Then spake Clim of the Clough,
with a wile we will us in bring:
Let vs say we be messengers,
straight come from the King.
Adam said I haue a Letter, well
let vs wisely warne:
We will say we haue the Kings seale,
I hold the Porter no Clarke,
Then Adam Bell beate at the gate,
with strokes great and strong:
The Porter heard such a noise therat,
and to the gates he throng,
Who is there said the Porter,
that maketh all this knocking?
We be two messengers said they then,
become right from the King.
We haue a Letter said Adam Bell,
to the Justice we must it bring:
Let vs in our message to do.
that we were againe to the King.
Here commeth none in said the Porter,
by him that dyed on a tree:
Till that a false theefe be hangd,
cald William of Cloudesle.
Then spake Clim of the Clough,
and swore by Mary free:
If that we stand long without,
like a theefe hang shalt thou be
Loe here we haue the Kings seale,

what Lurden art thou wood?
The Porter wend it had bene so,
and lightly did of his hood.
Welcome is my Lords seale he said,
for that you shall come in:
He opened the gates full shortly,
an euill opening for him.
Now are we in said Adam Bell,
whereof we are right fame:
But Christ he knowes assuredly,
how we shall out againe.
Had we the keyes said Clim of the Clough,
right well then should we spéed:
Then might we come out well enough,
when we see time and neede,
They called the Porter to counsell,
and wrung his necke in two:
And cast him in a dépe dungeon,
and toke the keyes him fro.
Now am I Porter said Adam Bell,
sée brother the keyes we have here:
The wo.ll Porter in merry Carlile,
that came this hundred yéere.
Now we will our bowes bend,
into the towne will wegoe:
For to deliver our deare brother,
that lieth in care and woe.
Then they bent their good yew bones,
and loked their strings were round.
The Market place in merry Carlile,
they beset in that stound,
And as they loked them beside,
a paire of new gallowes there they sée:
And the Justice with a Quest of Squires,
that iudgeth William hanged to be.

And

And Cloudesle lay ready there in a Carte,
fast bound both fote and hand:
And a strong rope about his necke,
already for to hang.
The Justice said to him a lad,
Cloudesle cloathes hee should have,
To take the measure of that yeoman,
and thereby to make him a graue.
I haue seene as great maruell said Clou-
as betweene this and prime: (desle,
He that maketh a grave for me,
himselfe may lye therein.
Thou speakest proudly said the Justice,
I will the hang with my hand:
Full well heard this his brethren two,
there still as they did stand.
Then William cast his eye aside,
and saw his two brethren
At the corner of the market place well pre-
ready the Justice to chase. (pard,
I see comfort said Cloudesle,
I yet hope I well to fare:
If I might have my hands let free,
right little might I care.
Then spake good Adam Bell,
to Clim of the Clough so free:
Brother see you marke the Justice well,
loe yonder you may him see.
At the Sheriffe shot I will,
strongly with an arrow keene:
A better shot in merry Carlile,
this seven yeare was not seene,
They loosed their arrowes both at once,
of no man they had dread:

The one hit the Justice, the other the She-
that both their sides gan bleed, (riffe
All men voyded that stood them nye,
when the Justice fell to the ground:
And the Sheriffe nye him by,
either had his deaths wound.
All the Cittizens fast gan flee,
they durst no longer abide;
There lightly they loosed Cloudesle,
where he with ropes lay tyde.
William stept to an Officer of the Towne,
his axe out of his hand he wrung:
On each side he smote them downe,
him thought he tarryed all too long.
William saide to his brethren two,
this day let us live and die:
If ever you have need as I have now,
the same shall you finde by me.
They shot so well that tide,
for their strings were of silke sure,
That they kept the streete on every sid,
he battell did long endure.
They fought together like bretheren true,
like hardy men and bold:
Many a man to the ground they threw,
and made many a heart cold.
But when their arrowes were all gone,
men pressed on them full fast:
They drew their swords then anon,
and their bowes from them cast.
They went lightly on their way,
with swords and bucklers round:
By that it were mid of the day,
they made many a wound,
Many an out horne in Carlile was blowne,
and

and the Wels backward did ring:
Many a woman said alas,
and many their hands did wring.
The Maior of Carlile forth come was,
and with him a full great rout:
These yeomen dread him full sore,
for of their lives they were in great doubt
The Maior came armed a full great pace,
with a Pollar in his hand:
Many a strong man with him was,
within that foure to stand.
The Maior smot at Cloudesle with his bill
his buckler brast in two:
Full many a yeoman with great euill,
alas treason they cried for woe.
Kepe we the gates fast they bad,
that these Traytors thereout not go:
But all for nought was that they wrought,
for so fast downe they were laid.
Till they all three that so manfully fought,
were gotten out of a braid.
Have here your keyes said Adam Bell,
my office here I forsake:
If you do by my counsell,
a new Porter do you make,
He threw the keyes at their heades,
and bad them euill to thriue:
And all that letteth any good yeoman,
to come and comfort his wife.
Thus be the good yeoman gone to the wood,
as lightly as leafe on linde:
They laugh and be merry in their mode,
their enemies were farre behinde,
When they came to Englishe wood,
under the trusty tree:

There they found hawes full good,
and arrowes great plenty.
So God me helpe said Adam Bell,
and Clim of the Clough so free:
I would we were in merry Carlile,
before that faire meny.
Then sat they downe & made good chere,
and eate and drunke full well:
Here is a fit of these wight yeomen,
another I will you tell.

AS they sat in English wood,
under their trusty tree:
They thought they heard a woman weepe,
but her they could not see.
Sore then sighted faire Alice,
that ever I saw this day:
For now is my deare husband slaine,
alas and welaway.
Might have I spoke with his deare bre-
or with either of them twaine, (thren,
To shew to them what him befell,
my heart were out of paine.
Cloudesle walkt a little aside,
and looked under the grene wood linde,
He saw his wife and children thre,
full woe in heart and minde,
Welcome wife then said William,
under this trusty tree:
I had weend yesterday by swet S. John,
thou shouldst me never see.
Now well is me she said that ye be here,
my heart is out of woe:
Wame he said be merry and glad,
and thanke my brethren two.

Hereof

Hereof to speake said Adam Bell,
I wis it is no boote:
The meat that we must sup withall,
it resteth yet fast on foot.
Then went they downe unto the lawnd,
these Noblemen all three:
Each of them slew a Hart of Grece,
the best they could there see.
Have here the best Alice my wife,
said William of Cloudesle:
Because ye so boldly stood by me,
when I was slaine full nye.
Thon they went to supper,
with such meate as they had:
And thanked God for their fortune,
& they were merry and glad.
And when they had supped well,
certaine without any lease.
Cloudesle said we will to our King,
to get vs a charter of peace.
Alice shall be at our sojourning,
in a Nunery here beside:
My two sonnes shall with her go,
and there they shall abide.
My eldest sonne shall goe with me,
for him I have no care:
And he shall bring you word againe,
how that we do fare.
Thus be these good yeoman to London gon,
as fast as they may hye:
Till they came to the Kings pallace,
where they would needs be.
And when they came to the Kings Court,
unto the pallace gate:
Of no man would they aske leave,

but

but boldly went in thereat,
They proceéded preſent into the hall,
of no man they had dread:
The Porter came after, and bid them call,
and with them gan to chide.
The Usher ſaid, yeoman what would you
I pray you tell to me? (haue
You might make Officers ſhent,
good ſirs from whence be ye?
Sir, we be out lawes of the Foreſt,
certaine without any leaſe:
And hither we be come to the King,
to get us a charter of peace.
And when they came before the King,
as it was the law of the land:
They knéeled downe without letting,
and each held up his hand.
They ſaid, Lord we beſéech thée here,
that ye will grant us grace:
For we have ſlaine your fat fallow Déere,
in many a ſundry place.
What be your names then ſaid the King,
anon that you tell me;
Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
and William of Cloudeſle.
Be ye thoſe théeues ſaid the King,
that men have told to me:
Here to God I make a vowe,
ye ſhall be hanged all thrée,
Ye ſhall be dead without mercy,
as I am King of this land:
He commanded his Officers euery chone,
faſt on them to lay hand.
Therefore they tooke theſe good yeomen,
and arreſted them all thrée:

So

So may I thrive said Adam Bell,
this game liketh not me.
But good Lord we beseech you now,
that ye will grant us grace,
Insomuch as we do to you come,
or else that we may from you passe,
With such weapons as we have here,
till we be out of your place:
And if we live this hundreth yere,
we will asks of you no grace.
Ye speake proudly said the King,
ye shall be hanged all three:
That were great pitty said the Quene,
if any grace might be.
My Lord when I came first into this Land
to be your wedded wife.
The first boone that I would aske,
you would grant me belive:
And I asked ye never none till now,
therefore good Lord grant it me:
Now aske it Madam said the King
and granted shall it be. A
Then good Lord I you beseech,
these yeomen grant ye me.
Madam ye might have asked a boone,
that should have bin worth then all three:
Ye might have asked towres and townes,
Parks and Forrests plenty.
None so pleasant to my pay she said,
nor none so lefe to me.
Madam, sith it is your desire,
your asking granted shall be:
But I had lever have given you,
good Market townes three.
The Quene was a glad woman,

and said, Lord grammercy.
I dare vndertake for them,
that true men they shall be:
But good Lord speake some merry word,
that they might comfort see.
I grant you grace then said the King,
wash fellowes and to meat go ye.
They had not sitten but a while,
certaine without leasing:
There come two messengers out of the
with letters to our King. North
And when they came before the King,
they knéeled downe upon their knée:
And said your Officers grete you well,
of Carlile in the North Country.
How fareth my Justice (said the King)
and my Sheriffe also:
Sir they be slaine without leasing,
and many an Officer moe.
Who hath them slaine, said the King,
anon that you tell me:
Adam Bell, Clim of the Clough,
and William of Cloudesle.
Alas for ruth then said the King,
my heart is wondrous sore:
I had lever then a thousand pound,
I had knowne this before,
For I have granted them grace,
and that forethinketh me:
But had I knowne all this before,
they had béene hanged all three,
The King opened the Letter anon,
himselfe he read it tho: (slaine,
And there found how these outlawes had
three hundred men and moe.

First

Firſt the Juſtice and the Shyriffe,
and the Maior of Carlile towne:
Of all the Conſtables and Catchpoles,
alive he left not one,
The Bailiffes and the Beadles both,
and the Sergeants of the Law:
And forty Forreſters of the fee,
theſe outlawes have ſlaine.
And broke his Parkes and ſlaine his deare,
of all they choſe the beſt:
So perillous outlawes as they were,
walked not by Eaſt nor Weſt.
When the King this Letter had read,
in heart he ſighed full ſore:
Take up the Table then ſaid he,
for I can eate no more,
The King then called his beſt Archers,
to the Buts with him to goe:
I will ſee theſe fellowes ſhoote ſaid he
that in the North have wrought this woe.
The Kings Bowmen buſkt them blith,
and the Queenes Archers alſo:
So did theſe wight yeomen,
with them they thought to goe.
There twice or thrice they ſhot about,
for to aſſay their hand:
There was no ſhot theſe yeomen ſhot,
that any pricke might ſtand.
Then ſpake William of Cloudeſle,
by him that for me dyed:
I hold him never a good Archer,
that ſhooteth at Buts ſo wide,
Whereat then ſaid the King,
I pray thee tell to me:
At ſuch a But ſir he ſaid,

as men use in my Country.
William went into the field,
and his two brethren with him,
There they set up two hasell rods,
twenty score pace between.
I hold him an Archer, said *Clondesle*,
that yonder wand cleaveth in two:
Here is none such, said the King,
for no man can so do.
I shall assay sir, said *Clondesle*,
or that I further go:
Clondesle with a bearing arrow,
clave the wand in two.
Thou art the best Archer, said the King,
for sooth that ever I see:
And yet for you love said William
I will do more malferte,
I have a sonne is seven yere old,
he is to me full dere:
I will tie him to a stake,
all shall see him that be here,
And lay an apple upon his head,
and goe sir core pace him fro:
And I my selfe with a broad arrow,
shall cleave the Apple in two.
Now haste thee then (said the King)
by him that dyed on a tree.
But if thou do not as thou hast said,
hanged shalt thou be.
And thou touch his head or gowne,
in sight that men may see:
By all the Saints that be in heaven,
I shall you hang all three.
That I have promised said William,
I never will forsake:

And

And there even before the King,
in the earth he drove a stake.
And bound thereto his eldest sonne,
and bad him stand still thereat:
And turned the childs face him fro,
because he should not start.
An Apple upon his head he set.
and then his bow he bent:
Six score paces there were met,
and thither Cloudesle went.
There he drew out a faire broad arrow,
his bow was great and long:
He set that arrow in his bow,
that was both stiffe and strong.
He prayed the people that were there,
that they would still stand:
For he that shooteth for such a wager,
had need of a steddy hand.
Much people prayed for Cloudesle,
that his life saved might be:
And when he made him ready to shoot,
there was many a weeping eye.
Thus Cloudesle clave the Apple in two,
as many a man might see:
Now God forbid then saide the King,
that thou shouldst shoote at me.
I give thee xviii. pence a day,
and my bow shalt thou beare:
And over all the North Country,
I make thee cheife Rider
And Ile give thee xiii. pence a day, said the
by God, and by my fay. Queene,
Come fetch thy paiment when thou wilt,
no man shall say thee nay.
William, I make thee a Gentleman,

of clothing and of fe:
And thy two brethren yeomen of my
for they are lovely to see, (Chamber,
Your sonne for he is tender of age,
of my Wineseller shall be.
And when he comes to mans estate,
better preferred shall he be.
And William bring me your wife, said the
I long full sore to see: (Quene.
She shall be my cheife Gentlewoman,
to governe my Nurserie.
The yeomen thanked them full curteously
and said to some Bishop we will wend,
Of all the sinnes that we have done,
to be assoyled at his hand.
So forth be gone these good yeomen,
as fast as they can hie.
And after came and lived with the King,
and died good yeomen all three.
Thus endeth the lives of these good yeo. (men)
God send them eternall blisse:
And all that with hend hole shooteth,
that of heaven may never misse.

FINIS.

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